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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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SUBJECT: "BACKYARD VITAMINS AND MINERALS" Information from home economists and plant scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
Free publication: "Victory Gardens," No. 483 from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Grow your vitamins and minerals in your own backyard this summer. That is what food experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture say. Grow your own vegetables--and help your family's health and your country's wartime food situation.

This year gardening is not only pleasant and profitable....it's a patriotic duty as well. Many more gardens and gardeners are needed this year if Americans are to have the variety of food they need to keep them fit.

The plain fact is that you will not be able to buy as much of certain fresh vegetables and fruits as usual because they won't be on the market to buy. Even if commercial growers could raise all the vegetables the country would use, they could not get enough trucks and freight cars to haul them across the country.

As for canned goods, Uncle Sam has already figured on taking half of all the vegetables commercially canned in 1943. So Americans are going to need all the food they can grow on 6 million farms and 12 or 15 million backyards and vacant lots.

The farm people are bearing the brunt of this great job. Millions of tons of the food farms will produce this year are already earmarked for our armed forces and allies. Our soldiers and the men fighting with them will have first call on food. And a soldier eats twice as much as the average civilian. But people on the home front need to be well-fed, too--and many of them are working harder than ever before. So the food must stretch to our own boys, to the starving people of

liberated countries, To our allies, and also our civilian population. To keep everybody supplied with all the food needed is not going to be simple.

Every home gardener can see that at least one family has the vitamins and minerals vegetables can supply. If you have the right garden ground, plan now to put it to use for feeding your family. Plan to have plenty of green and yellow vegetables and tomatoes...and to keep a fresh supply coming on all summer and as late in the fall as possible. Just a few weeks after planting your garden can supply greens of various kinds, lettuce, onions and radishes. A little later snap beans will come along...and then tomatoes right off your own vines. If possible, plant enough tomatoes to can as well as serve fresh. Whatever you can at home, you are sure of having, regardless of rationing. The Government is making arrangements for enough jar rings and closures for home canning this year.

Gardeners with plenty of ground will be wise to raise enough carrots, turnips, potatoes and cabbage to store in the cellar or in outdoor pits.

Now is not a moment too soon to lay plans for your garden, and order supplies. In planning count first on the vegetables that supply the most in food value for the space they occupy in the garden. If you are busy, consider also the time the different crops require. In planning for food value, remember that though vegetables contain many different nutrients, their chief contributions to family meals are vitamins and minerals, especially the vitamins A and C, and the minerals iron and calcium. Vegetables also furnish some of the B vitamins--in small amounts to be sure, but even small amounts of B may mean a good deal.

Fortunately for victory gardeners, some of the easiest vegetables to grow are also the most valuable. Tomatoes which are tops for vitamin C are a blessing to beginners especially because they are so easy to grow.

"Cooking greens"--turnip, beet, mustard, collards, kale or spinach-- and salad greens--lettuce, green cabbage, and chard--are important for vitamin A, iron and calcium and are some of the most successful vegetables for spring and

fall gardens.

Green beans also rate for vitamin A and iron--and for vitamin C and some B, too, if you cook them properly. Beans and peas are not difficult to grow, but green peas take up extra space, so the size of your garden counts in deciding whether or not to raise them. And green peas are a cool weather crop, most successful in the cooler parts of the country or for spring and fall gardens.

A few vegetables that don't rate much in vitamins and minerals deserve space in the garden for special appetizing qualities like color or flavor. One of these vegetables is the onion, not so much for food value, but a wonder for seasoning--the very makings of many a lowcost dish. Another is the beet. The virtue of the beet is its bright red color which often gives a lift to an otherwise pale meal. The radish also is distinguished not so much for food value because people eat it in small amounts, but more for its color, crispness and peppery flavor.

Since the war British home gardens have concentrated on the carrot for the vitamin A it supplies. American gardeners may well plant more carrots and other yellow vegetables since some other vitamin A foods are short.

If you have an hour or more every day to spend on a garden... if you have space in your own yard or nearby...if you have reasonably good soil not shaded by large trees or buildings or filled with tree roots, then plan now to grow your own minerals and vitamins this summer.

Start off by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for a free bulletin called "Victory Gardens" No. 423.

